



**TESTIMONY ON SB 38 – Sen. Don Ryan
Senate Education and Cultural Resources
January 15, 2007**

Chairman Ryan and members of the committee:

For the record, I am Pete Carparelli, Executive Director of the Montana Quality Education Coalition.

I appear on behalf of MQEC and as a proponent of SB 38 sponsored by Senator Ryan.

In previous testimony I have shared with you the goals of MQEC and its approach to proposed legislation related to the funding of Montana's public elementary and secondary schools. Although I will not present such a preamble again today, I will submit it as part of my written testimony.

As you know, the goal of the Montana Quality Education Coalition is adequate stable on-going funding for quality public K–12 education as defined in 20-9-309 MCA passed by the Montana Legislature in 2005 and as assured by the Montana Constitution. MQEC will evaluate legislation proposed during the 2007 Legislature, and will support such legislation that adequately addresses one or more of the requirements of 20-9-309 MCA and meets the state's constitutional obligation to adequately fund our public K–12 school system. It will also provide information to assist the Legislative and Executive branches in its considerations of proposed legislation dealing with Montana's public elementary and secondary schools.

MQEC honors the Court's recognition of the legislature's right to phase in any remedy over time, and MQEC will support legislation as part of a phase-in remedy that explicitly prescribes a cost-based approach and leads to a defined funding goal over a specified period of time.

MQEC will oppose legislation that is not consistent with 20-9-309 MCA and the Court's decision.

Today, MQEC supports passage of SB 38, "An Act Revising Certain School District Transportation;" because it provides an opportunity for the continuation of funding for educationally relevant transportation while freeing district general fund dollars that are sometimes used for such transportation, to be applied to other activities related to direct instruction and other costs of operation.

We encourage the legislature to periodically review the cost of school transportation in order to ascertain a realistic cost-base for transportation reimbursement claims.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. Thank you, Senator Ryan for bringing SB 38 to the Legislature.